

City of Cottonwood

Department of Parks and Recreation

News Release

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“Life is a Journey”

On January 27, the Cottonwood Youth Advisory Commission met the senior citizens at Verde Valley Manor for their traditional high noon lunch potluck. During this unassuming lunch the commission was taken on a verbal recollection through our country’s most prolific times. The commission was taught history through the eye’s that witnessed it. When the commission first entered the large space used for grander events they felt a little shy and out of place, but soon the stories quickly captivated them. Two life journeys that truly touched the commission were the stories of a visiting anonymous Vietnam Veteran, and Beazie Synder.



The Veteran younger than most in the room started to tell his story to the few commissioners around his table and opened the eyes of our Internet Generation members. The commission was astounded by the camaraderie the gentleman spoke of while he was overseas. Being in Vietnam was like coming up from the depths of the ocean struggling to achieve that first breath of fresh air, and each soldier handled it in their own way some by exuding testosterone. He spoke of a story in which a young Marine approached a Navy Seal and his buddies and picked up the Navy Seal and put him in a trashcan. He made it known to the commission members that Navy Seals were the most feared and respected force and this was unheard of. The commission members around his table were on the edge of their seat, but during the conclusion they sat back in their chairs and gasped. This was due to the fact that after this man had overcome struggles, death, and uncompromising conditions he returned home to a country that did not welcome him. He stated he was homeless for three years and couldn’t find a job to support himself after returning from Vietnam. The commission had heard of such stories, but never heard about it firsthand.

The other journey the commission was enamored by was the story of women who shared the same tenacity as Amelia Earhart. Her name is Beazie Synder she was formally referred to as “Bee”, but as she got older she felt she needed to spice it up a little and came up with Beazie. Beazie lives by the motto that she is not getting older, but lives life for the ride it offers today. She represents the image of a little old lady that pinches the cheeks of youth, but when she showed up at the tattoo shop two years ago as she was approaching her 90’s and showed the artist some ideas she was thinking of he stated... “who is this for?” her reply... “me!” Beazie is not

covered in tattoos, but wanted something to celebrate her best friend...her cat. Beazie was witty and quick and spoke of WWII when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and when we bombed Hiroshima. She remembers vividly when the Pacific Fleet was hit. She was on her way home with her parents and was met at the door with family members exclaiming "THE JAPANESE HIT US." When the United States dropped the bombs on Japan and the war was announced over she said everyone was running up and down the streets smashing their pots and pans together and shouting "THE WAR IS OVER." The commission asked Beazie "Did we need to bomb Japan to end the war?" Beazie replied "I don't think so, but we were losing a lot of lives and it seemed like every day in class they were announcing another local soldier that had been lost in battle." Once Beazie graduated school she enlisted in the Army to serve her country. During this time in her life she spoke of Big Band clubs, speeding in New York (45 mph), relationships, and working in the medical field as an enlisted soldier.

When she decided to leave the Army she began working for public hospitals. She told the commissioners around the table of two cases that stood out to her. One of a middle aged man that was burned from head to toe, and during this time medical advances in the burn field were minute. He survived through all odds and when Beazie began to get to know him she asked why he fought so hard to live. He explained to her that his son's mother had passed and he could not leave him alone. The other story Beazie spoke of was of a young nurse that stayed with a child that was diagnosed with a fatal ghastly disease that had caused the child to swell. The nurse stayed with the child day and night even on her days off. Beazie's witnessed the nurse commonly holding the child and in her eyes considered the young nurse an angel. Beazie stated the medical field advances today are amazing thanks to the sacrifices of my generation and the persistence of yours. She witnessed this first hand after her own visit to the local Cardiac Cath Lab when she walked out an hour later after heart problems. She left in an hour and was walking. Next she began to tell of her recollection of this country's struggle for Civil Rights. She explained to the commission members which were still gleaming at her that even when it was a social norm and even considered cool to be racist she refused to do so even when being stationed with the Army in the South. Beazie summed it all up by stating "Love everyone, enjoy every day and never grow up." Beazie smiled and remembered her convertible Triumph Sports car after stating this. "Thanks for the journey Beazie" CYAC President Andrew Hickey stated as they hugged good bye."

After the humble lunch at Verde Valley Manor the 12 commission members that attended which were buzzing with stories and conversation hung around in the parking lot forgetting their current busy Friday schedules.

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